NAXOS

John DOWLAND

The Queen's Galliard

Lute Music • 4

Nigel North, Lute

John Dowland (1563–1626)
Lute Music • 4

A true genius in any artistic field is a rare thing. In the world of the lute John Dowland most certainly qualifies for this accolade. Despite his being a Catholic at the wrong time in English history and a man with a rather difficult complaining character, Dowland's genius still brought him praise and honour from his contemporaries. In a sonnet from 1598 the poet Richard Barnfield paid the most telling tribute to Dowland by writing "*Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch/Upon the lute: doth ravish human sense"*. From this, and from Dowland's music itself, we can sense that Dowland's inimitable qualities as a performer (of his own compositions) were the beauty of his tone coupled with an extraordinary ability to move the emotions of his listeners.

In our 21st century Dowland is often remembered for his "*Lachrimae*" *Pavan*, and as a composer of melancholic music. This gives us, however, a very limited and unduly biased view of our "English Orpheus" because Dowland's music explores the complete range of human emotions with a unique blend of spirit, heart and intellect. The other qualities which are very much apparent are a wonderful melodic gift and a thorough, ingenious contrapuntal skill. While it is often virtuosic, Dowland's lute music is always natural and idiomatic. All of these qualities can be found throughout Dowland's canon of works which principally consists of about one hundred solo lute pieces, almost the same quantity of lute songs, with some consort pieces for viols and lute.

Shakespeare and John Dowland were exact contemporaries, born one year apart. Shakespeare (born in 1564) is known to have revised his works over many years but this does not diminish our admiration of his genius. Similarly, Dowland revised much of his music from year to year. Some lute pieces survive in as many as ten versions so it is impossible to define any as "the authentic one". The lute was a continuously developing instrument and Dowland would have begun his "luting" on an instrument with only six courses (pairs of strings) but would have played a nine or ten course lute in his maturity. Thus we can trace Dowland's development side by side with that of the lute. Of course, the writing for the instrument tells us much, as does the history of each manuscript in which the music is found. More interesting evidence can be gleaned from the dedications which Dowland gave to many of his lute pieces. Patrons and courtiers, for example, often changed their names through marriage, they received new titles by Royal command, or they may also have gained a degree at one of the two English Universities. From all these directions, we can build a fairly clear chronological journey.

While borrowing ideas from the past, Dowland and Shakespeare were both extremely innovative in their creations. In Dowland's musical environment, it was perhaps more that the air was full of certain ideas, fashions and conventions and it was simply unavoidable to share or borrow from this collective. For Dowland this might have been in the form of a phrase, (such as the famous descending *Lachrimae* theme) or a way of working with a musical figure and its inherent rhetorical meaning. Through his lute music Dowland's spirit remains as alive now as it was some four hundred years ago.

The Queen's Galliard

The present programme is all about "song and dance". It interweaves songs (as ballads), dance-songs, the Galliard and the Queen's court and court gossip. Almost every piece on this recording has a history, story or scandal associated with it, much of it dating from the 1580s and 1590s.

The *galliard* was clearly Dowland's favourite dance form and was a lively triple metre dance which normally had three strains with repeats. Dowland left us approximately thirty galliards (twice as many as any other dance form) that are strikingly varied in length, style and divisions. The earlier ones were brief, with few divisions on repeats, and often require a faster tempo. Fine examples of these are *Dowland's First Galliard* 3 and three other *galliards*, *P. 20* 24 *P. 27* 11 and *P. 35* 18. A few of Dowland's early galliards are in binary form with no divisions for repeats. The best example of this is *John Dowland's Galliard (P. 21)* 4.

Queen Elizabeth was so enamoured with music and dancing that one painter of the time captured her dancing with a court favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Dowland dedicated two galliards to Queen Elizabeth, and these open the recording. The first, *Queen Elizabeth, her Galliard* 1 *(*published in 1610, seven years after the Queen's death) was not an original piece but a revision of an earlier galliard (c. 1590) dedicated to Kathryn Darcie, who became became Mrs Clifton in 1591. The second, *The Queen's Galliard* 2, is reminiscent of the song *My thoughts are winged with hopes (Sir John Souch's Galliard* 13*)* and is in the less familiar key of B flat minor. Perhaps Dowland was expressing something of the difficulty he had with the Queen by choosing such an unusual and difficult key.

Queen Elizabeth's last official suitor for marriage was the Duc d'Alençon who came to England in 1579 and 1581. He was a small ugly man with a huge nose and a face disfigured by small pox. He was, however, an excellent dancer and Elizabeth decided to call him her *Frog*. When she finally refused him, he departed for France distraught and deceived. The song *Now, oh now I needs must part* (from Dowland's *First Booke of Songs or Ayres)* is thought to be about the Duke's departure, and is a version of an early galliard known as the *Frog Galliard* 6. In binary form, this galliard has an unusual trochaic rhythm in the first strain, and some of Dowland's most melodic and inventive divisions.

Another galliard with an interesting back story is *Can she excuse* 20 *(*later called *The Earl Essex's Galliard*). Its companion song from the *First Booke* is *Can she excuse my wrongs?*, the text of which is thought to be by Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex. Long after the visit of the Duc d'Alençon, Robert Devereux became Elizabeth's famous court favourite. He often displeased the Queen and was sent away from court. At these times he would retreat to Wanstead (in the country outside London) where he would walk in the woods and write sonnets to the Queen begging for her forgiveness. All of this is encapsulated in the galliard and song *Can she excuse*. The ballad tune *Will you go walk the woods so wild,* heard in the lute part of the third strain, is a very apt description of Essex's country activities. He was beheaded for treason in 1601.

The final galliard in this recording is the *King of Denmark's Galliard* 25, John Dowland's 1610 revision of his earlier *Battle Galliard*. Dowland had been court lutenist to the Danish King Christian IV from 1598 to 1606 and it seems most probable that he dedicated the revised *Battle Galliard* out of respect for his former employer, especially as Christian's sister, Anne, was now Queen of England. The *King of Denmark's Galliard* has many new divisions on the war-like battle motifs and shows us how developed and inventive Dowland's late division style became.

While Dowland was admired as a composer of airs for voice and lute, he is not thought to have been a professional singer. His *First Booke of Songs or Ayres* was published in 1597 and it set a standard for the subsequent lute song collections over the next thirty years. In Dowland's *First Booke* there are several airs in the form of galliards. Some of these dance-songs are early galliards with newly added lyrics (such as *Sir John Souch, his Galliard/My thoughts are winged with hopes, Frog Galliard/Now oh now I needs must part*, *Earl of Essex Galliard/Can she excuse my wrongs, Pipers Galliard/If my complaints*), while other songs feel like dances but have not survived in instrumental versions (e.g. *Sleep wayward thoughts* and *Rest a while ye cruel cares*). In Dowland's canon there are two songs from his *First Booke* which have survived in arrangements for solo lute, but it is unlikely that Dowland himself made these versions. *Awake Sweet Love*, could well be based on an early lute galliard, now lost. The version thought to be made by Dowland's contemporary Francis Cutting and not by Dowland himself (*P. 24*) can be heard on 15, followed by my own more ambitious version 16 which stays closer to the Dowland song in notes and spirit. A similar story exists with *Come again (P. 60)* 12. It is a rather simple lute setting which I have extended with my divisions.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ballad tunes were like folk-songs. Everyone knew them, at court or in the country. Each ballad began its life as a tune with an accompanying story. The original tunes kept their names but during the course of time new stories were often set to the original ballad tunes. Known as *Broadsides* (so called because they were usually printed on a large sheet known as a Broadside) the ballads were a medium for current social and political comment. Serious composers such as Dowland or Byrd often took ballad tunes and set them for keyboard, lute or consort in versions with variations, or divisions. Dowland has left us eight such settings, quite varied in their treatments of the melodies, and all eight are included in this recording. *What if a day* 17**,** *Lord Willoughby's welcome home* 19 and *Fortune my foe* 22 are treated simply with only a few variations in each setting. The other five, *Aloe* 7*, Robin* 21*, Go from my window* 14*, Walsingham* 9 and *Loth to depart* 23 are given more serious, complex and contrapuntally developed renderings.

What if a day survives in an autograph manuscript copy, probably composed on the spot as Dowland wrote out a simple setting for a student. The ballad *Fortune my foe* (also called *Complaint* by Dowland) started out as a "Lover's complaint" but soon became the tune to which condemned people sang their last words before going to their death at the gallows**.** The popularity of Dowland's setting is illustrated by the fact that William Byrd adapted it for keyboard. *Lord Willoughby's welcome home* (later also know as *Roland*) started out as a ballad celebrating the 1589 homecoming of the famous English soldier, Peregrine Bertie. *Aloe* is not such a common ballad and the original text is unknown. Of all of Dowland's ballad settings this is his most dance-like, sounding much like an *Almain*. *Go from my window,* a simple love poem, was also simple in its melodic and harmonic structure and popular amongst composers for lute or keyboard. Dowland's setting is a perfect example of his work. *Robin* (or *Robin is to the greenwood gone)* was probably as well known to Dowland as *Greensleeves* is to us, and is one of the many ballad tunes quoted by Ophelia in her mad speech in *Hamlet*. Another very popular tune with composers, *Walsingham***,** was about the pilgrimage to a shrine in Walsingham (Norfolk, England). Dowland's setting has exquisite counterpoint throughout the seven variations. The most complex of all ballad settings is *Loth to depart*. The opening phrase is

like a melancholic rendering of the *King of Denmark's Galliard*. The lost ballad text is thought to have been one of mournful regret of departure. The Earl of Essex turns up in our story again. A new ballad text was made on *Loth to depart* in 1599 when *London's Loathe to depart* described his departure to Ireland as commander of the invading British forces. Dowland's seven divisions on this ballad keep to the sentiment of the ballad while stretching the contrapuntal possibilities of one player on one lute.

Nigel North

Get this free download from Classicsonline!

Milano: Fantasias, Ricercars and Duets: *Fantasia sexta for two lutes*
Copy this Promotion Code **Naxf3fW2D7h5** and go to www.classicsonline.com/mpkey/mil12_main

Downloading Instructions

1. Log on to Classicsonline. If you do not have a Classicsonline account yet, please register at http://www.classicsonline.com/UserLogIn/SignUp.aspx.
2. Enter the Promotion Code mentioned above.
3. On the next screen, click on "Add to My Downloads".

classicsonline
THE TOTAL CLASSICAL MUSIC DOWNLOAD SITE

Nigel North

Born in London, Nigel North has been Professor of Lute at the Early Music Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington since 1999. Initially drawn to music at the age of seven by the early 1960s instrumental pop group *The Shadows*, he studied classical music through the violin and guitar, eventually discovering his real path in life, the lute, when he was fifteen. Basically self taught on the lute, he has since 1976 developed a unique musical life which embraces activities as as teacher, accompanist, soloist, director and writer. His principal music passions apart from teaching are accompanying singers, the solo lute repertoires of Elizabethan England and late German Baroque music of Bach and Weiss. Recordings include a four-CD box set *Bach on the Lute* (Linn Records) and four CDs of the *Lute Music of John Dowland* (Naxos).

NAXOS

DOWLAND: Lute Music • 4

8.570284

Nigel North's Dowland Lute Edition has gained him a garland of critical accolades: "A collector's item" (*The Times* on Vol 1, 8.557586), "a remarkable performance of wonderful music" (*American Record Guide* on Vol 2, 8.557862), "North's sweet-toned playing is both unfailingly musical and highly imaginative" (*Gramophone* on Vol 3, 8.570449), "Nigel North's Dowland cycle sets a new benchmark" (5 STARS, *BBC Music Magazine*). On this fourth and final volume, North presents a selection of dances and songs by the composer celebrated as the 'English Orpheus'.

John DOWLAND
(1563–1626)

1	Queen Elizabeth, her Galliard	1:22
2	The Queen's Galliard, P. 97	1:44
3	Dowland's First Galliard	2:13
4	John Dowland's Galliard, P. 21	1:16
5	Complaint, P. 63	1:22
6	The Frog Galliard	2:02
7	Aloe	3:15
8	Galliard on Walsingham	2:04
9	Walsingham	4:50
10	Coranto	1:48
11	Galliard, P. 27	1:55
12	Come again, sweet love, P. 60 (new version by Nigel North)	2:25
13	Sir John Souch's Galliard	1:42
14	Go from my window	4:04
15	Galliard: Awake sweet love, P. 24	1:21
16	Galliard: Awake sweet love (new version by Nigel North)	2:38
17	What if a day	1:43
18	Galliard, P. 35	1:49
19	Lord Willoughby's welcome home	1:30
20	Galliard: Can she excuse	1:53
21	Robin	3:42
22	Fortune my foe	2:33
23	Loth to depart	6:26
24	Galliard, P. 20	1:36
25	The King of Denmark's Galliard	3:05

Nigel North, Lute

Includes Free Downloadable Bonus Track available at www.classicsonline.com.
Please see inside booklet for full details.

Recorded in St John Chrysostom Church, Newmarket, Canada, from 28th June to 1st July, 2007
Producers: Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver • Engineer and Editor: Norbert Kraft
Booklet notes: Nigel North • Instrument: 8 course lute (A 440) by Paul Thomson, Bristol 1999 after Venere (16th century) (2–9; 16–18, 24 & 25); 9 course lute (A 392) by Lars Jönsson, Dalarö, Sweden, 2005 after Hans Frei (16th century) (1, 10–15, 19–23)
Cover Picture: *Queen Elizabeth I playing the lute* by Nicholas Hillard (1547–1619)
(Berkeley Castle, Gloucestershire, UK / Bridgeman Art Library)

NAXOS

8.570284

DDD

Playing Time
60:16

7 47313 02847 4

℗ & © 2009 Naxos Rights International Ltd.

Booklet notes in English
Disc Made in Canada
Printed & Assembled in USA

www.naxos.com

NAXOS
DOWLAND: Lute Music • 4
8.570284